

FWP COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: August 18, 2011

Agenda Item: Sorenson/Wyman Property Fee Title Purchase **Division:** Wildlife

Action Needed: **Endorse Course of Action**

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 10 minutes

Background

FWP proposes a fee title purchase of 1093.4 acres of Yellowstone River bottomland adjacent to Seven Sisters WMA. This purchase includes 1024.5 acres of land owned by Lucille Sorenson and 68.9 acres of land owned by Larry Wyman. Approximately 971 acres (89%) is native Yellowstone River riparian habitat. The purchase, management and development of this site would: (1) enhance the functionality and broaden the “footprint” of the WMA, (2) reclaim cottonwood riparian habitat, (3) increase recreational opportunity, and (4) help minimize recreational conflicts with neighbors. The property provides access to the Yellowstone River and would provide the public with a number of recreational opportunities including: hunting, boating, fishing, wildlife watching, agate picking, and access to publicly owned islands. Management activities would include restoration of a portion of the irrigated cropland to a combination of native riparian vegetation, dense nesting cover, brood cover and winter food plots for resident wildlife. The existing native riparian habitat would be maintained.

Public Involvement Process & Results

An EA and subsequent public involvement is presently under development, pending Commission endorsement.

Alternatives and Analysis

Proposed Action: FWP proposes to purchase acquire 1093.4 acres of wildlife habitat adjacent to Seven Sisters WMA along the Yellowstone River. FWP would secure permanent public access to this land, as well as access to the Yellowstone River. This project would conserve animal and plant species biodiversity and important wildlife habitat.

No Action alternative: FWP would forgo the opportunity to purchase the property. There would be no guarantee of public access to the property for recreation, and land access to the Yellowstone River would not be secured for the public.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale

FWP recommends approval by the FWP Commission to proceed with the fee title purchase of Yellowstone River bottomland from Lucille Sorenson and Larry Wyman. This project will conserve and protect important riparian/cropland habitats along the Yellowstone River and provide permanent public recreational access.

Proposed Motion

I move that the Commission grant FWP preliminary approval to negotiate fee title purchase of 1024.5 acres of land owned by Lucille Sorenson and 68.9 acres of land owned by Larry Wyman.